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FORUM

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION 112.

J. H. C.—The questions are hardly even related. An occulist is essentially a Theosophist, but it does not follow that a Theosophist is necessarily an occulist. Whether a modern business man can be either depends upon the individual, I should say. Either combination, while not impossible, will be difficult. One may realize karmic responsibility at its full value and have sufficient strength of character to make his life conform to that law of justice, mercy and truth under all circumstances. But he will certainly feel lonesome in the business world of to-day and his chances for material success will be more than doubtful. The law of the "survival of the fittest," in its most materialistic and cruel interpretation, is the dominant spirit of our *fin de siècle* civilization and the popular axiom is the paraphrase "Do others, or others will do you." The man who has in him something of Caius Mucius Scaevola may breast that current and it is not absolutely certain that it will overwhelm him—but it is probable, for the world-soul is strong in evil on the material plane. But for progress in occultism more is necessary than heroic devotion to the pure principle and self-sacrifice in adherence to it. The personal requirements are not compatible with the demands of business life. Though I believe they may be harmonized with the habits of certain phases of professional and

scientific life to extent sufficient to attain progress and more favorable conditions in the next incarnation. One thing should not be lost sight of however—"there is merit in endeavor, even though it may not achieve success."

A. B. G.—Assuming that all men are alike in essence, then there remains only the choice as to the "*mode*" of devotion. There being only two *modes*, the Sankhya, and Yoga, the business man must choose the latter, which is "devotion in the performance of action," leaving the Sankhya method, or "exercise of reason in contemplation" to those more favored by circumstance.

Therefore it is that Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita that "renunciation of action and devotion through action are both means of final emancipation, but, of these two, devotion through action is better than renunciation."

Chapter 3 of the Bhagavad Gita introduces the subject and it is elaborated in Chapter 5, and the conclusion follows that true Yoga consists in adopting every circumstance in life to an exemplification of the divine truth of the Yoga method of deliverance.

J. D. B.—I think in the first place, a great deal would depend on the man and the character of his business. With a great majority of occupations financial success, which is the standard usually set up, demands or is believed to demand, absorption of energy and intellect, and great disregard of the interests of others. Profit for one, through competition, often means loss and bankruptcy to another, or to many. Greed and rapacity are thus the price of success measured by money. Under such circumstances there is neither time, energy, opportunity, capacity nor desire, for those higher activities or achievements designated as Theosophical. The two conditions are diametrically opposed and never have existed or can exist together.

With other men in other occupations the case may be quite different. The calling itself may be beneficent and a help, not a hinderance to others. The character of the individual has already determined this in the selection of the calling. Broad philanthropy and genuine altruism are by no means inconsistent nor impossible with a business life in the world, or with that "skill in the performance of actions" which is real wisdom. The ideals and aims of the individual guide and largely determine his experience.

The "pursuit of occultism" may be variously apprehended and differently defined. In its highest and best sense it is spiritual knowledge derived from experience. This means the opening of

the spiritual perceptions and the grasp of spiritual knowledge, the power to apprehend the mysterious nature and powers of one's inner nature, or real Being. The pursuit of such knowledge and the gaining of such experience is not incompatible with a business life in the world, provided that business be conducted on upright and honorable principles, and that for sake of self it never disregards the rights of others. He who is never unjust will not long remain unwise. A knowledge of real occultism thus derived, will in the end, make one master of his surroundings and circumstances, and the first step in such conquest is self-mastery. The theatre of battle is the mind. The reason why so few make any real progress is because they fail to control thought or to realize that any such control is either possible or desirable. Just here lies the value of ideals, and the reason why Brotherhood, even as a sentiment is desirable. Whenever it becomes a settled principle of action, and is held as an ideal in the mind, embodying as it does justice and altruism the individual is already a true Theosophist, and, so far, an occultist.

Genuine and substantial progress in this direction is not only not incompatible with a business life in the world, but is often so best secured. Until one has progressed a very long way in the face of temptation and opportunity for the exercise of greed or altruism, he cannot have developed strength of will and character requisite for the next higher step.

There is consonant relation as to both power and degree of development in man, between the Universal spirit and the spiritual powers of man. Only spirit can apprehend the spiritual. "Man grows like what he feeds on," and self-conquest guided by Divine Ideals is of slow growth. A life of indolence, shirking ordinary duties, under the plea of spiritual development, or the pursuit of occultism, is but a gloss for common laziness, and self-conceit and imbecility are its highest rewards. When one has fulfilled every obligation and is free from duties to family, neighbors and country, and at the same time finds himself able to apprehend spiritual truths, Karma has already opened the door for his further enlightenment, and he will have no uncertainty whatever as to the next step. The inner light will have found the inward voice, and action as in-action will be pre-determined by the Higher Self. Jungles and caves are the lonesomest places in the world for one who has not learned the full meaning of self-conquest. The open mart is a thousand times preferable and more conducive to real progress in Occultism.

THE ORIENTAL DEPARTMENT.

Edited by Charles Johnston.

MEDITATION.

"The Seer is not born, nor dies, nor does He come from aught, or become aught. Unborn, everlasting, eternal, the Ancient is not slain when the body is slain.

"If the slayer thinks to slay Him, if the slain thinks He is slain, both understand not; this slays not, nor is slain.

"Smaller than small, mightier than mighty, this Soul dwells in the heart of every being; without sacrifice he beholds the greatness of the Soul, through the grace of that Ruler, and free from sorrow.

"Seated, that Soul goes far; resting, it goes everywhere. Who else is worthy to know that bright one, who is unsated delight?

"Bodiless in bodies; firm among fleeting things; the wise man grieves not, perceiving that mighty lord, the Soul.

"This Soul is not to be gained by preaching, nor by knowledge, nor by hearing much; whom this Soul chooses, by him it is to be won; and the Soul chooses his body for its own.

"But not he who has ceased not from evil, who has not won peace, who is not intent, nor he whose mind has not won peace, may win Him even by wisdom.

"Of whom priest and warrior are the food, whose anointing is Death,—who rightly knows where that Soul is?"

(*Katha Upanishad, I, 2.*)

"The Breath breathes where it will, and the voice of it thou hearest, but knowest not whence it comes, and whither it goes; so is everyone who has been born of the Breath."

I once gained a great reputation for wisdom, with a tender young Brother, who tiptoed about in search of his soul. He asked me if I really knew anything about Meditation, and I answered: "Absolutely nothing." He thought that only an adept could make a reply like that.

But if I know nothing about Meditation, or at least about the strange, weird thing he had in mind, I suspect many things. And one of them is, that a great deal of nonsense has been spoken about this somewhat mysterious topic.

Underneath this aspirant's question was an assumption which is really at the root of much human folly,—the assumption that we

can avail ourselves of the superior wisdom of some one else, to save our souls, or to get into the kingdom of heaven, or to "establish communications with adepts," or whatever expression one may give to this aspiration.

I do not think the enquirer about meditation would have admitted that; I do not think he even realized it. Nevertheless, it is true that numbers of people, who have been studying the traditions of wisdom for years, and who ought to know better, do really believe that they can be "saved," or acquire "spiritual merit," whatever they may be, through the wisdom or knowledge of some one else. And in this supposition there lurks a double danger; a danger to the person believing, and a danger to the person believed in.

The first danger, I think, we have all had chances to observe. We have seen to what extent admiring worship can go; how soon it turns into servile adulation; and how soon this, in its turn, becomes absolute slavery. So that people of mature age, and otherwise sound intellect, go about in bodily and mental fear of their prophets, and are in continual dread that, even in thought, they may offend; and as far as human experience goes, there is apparently no limit at all to the wild absurdities of superstitious dread which an otherwise sane human being can fall into, till we come to the terrorism of the eastern astrologer, stretching from before birth until after death; the tyranny of the Hindu priest, whose disciples are induced to do all kinds of humiliating and idiotic things; and, indeed, the "spiritual" tyranny of priests all the world over, and in every age.

Now as far as the degrading effect of this kind of worship is concerned, I am deeply convinced that it matters very little whether it be bestowed on a worthy or an unworthy object. The condition of moral deliquescence arrived at is precisely the same. The sufferer gradually loses all self-reliance, all power of initiative, all strength of will, all the elasticity and buoyancy of spirit which alone give him a right to breathe the vital airs. And I would make no exception whatever to this rule, but rather would declare it to be my most assured conviction that worship of any teacher, spiritual pastor, or master, however high, however holy he may be, is invariably weakening and degrading to the worshipper, and deprives him of all possibility of acquiring that very spiritual power which he so much admires in another.

And this sort of worship is very demoralising to its object. There is, in every one of us, a fountain of unquenchable valor,

through which we feel ourselves easily able to counterbalance the world, and dwell in firm and buoyant possession of our own lives. There is also in us a boundless possibility of cowardice, through which we are continually driven to seek the feeling or strength by various outer expedients. The pursuit of riches is only one of these expedients. No man seeks wealth, unless he feels himself to be poor. And the greater the avidity of his search, the greater his confession of poverty.

Another expedient is the craving for domination over others. We seek to assure ourselves of our strength, by making other people do things our way, and see things as we see them; and we cannot endure contradiction, and difference of opinion. Some people are born sectarians, always contesting someone's opinion, and fighting for their own view of truth. And they are unhappy, to the utmost depths of misery, when other people disagree with them; and they have ever in their minds a division of mankind into orthodox and heterodox, loyal and traitors, faithful and faithless,—the first term of the division meaning nothing more than those who agree with themselves, and their opinions. And that craving to have people see things our way is an element of weakness, for it shows that we have no real and abiding satisfaction in our own truth, for its own intrinsic value. And this element of weakness, going with an otherwise gifted nature, brings the longing for spiritual domination. There is nothing which people are more ready to administer to than this instinct; and the way along that flowery path is swift. It brings at no very distant date, the willingness to reinforce domination by appeals to all kinds of supernatural authority, whether it be: "thus saith the Lord," or "the Master says—." The appeal in the one case is as bad as in the other. The truest thing on earth can but be true; it cannot be any truer because an archangel says it. And once the authority of the archangels is invoked, their names are likely to be appended to all kinds of queer and unexpected documents.

Let me give an instance, a perfectly authentic fact. A remarkable clairvoyante, who had a talent for many things, but little ability in matters of practical life, got into the way of indorsing all kinds of true enough visions by saying "Master—says this or that." It finally came down to this: "Master—says you are to pay my landlady for me." This was done. Then came the codicil: "Master says: I hope you did not forget the washing?"

As far as we can understand human frailty, there is no limit in this direction, just as there is no limit to the foolishness which peo-

ple may be led into, by the habit of following these supernatural sanctions. The result is bad, in either case. And this, without regard to the initial sanity or sanctity of the culprits.

So that, when my young friend asked me whether I knew anything about mediation, what he really meant was: do you know any psychological trick, which you can teach me, and through which I may be able to save my soul?

Now I think the principle which underlies this, is wholly false, and I shall try to bring this false principle to light. I am very completely convinced that no one can derive any benefit at all from any teacher, pastor, or master, or any "highly evolved entity" whatever, except in so far as that person possesses his own soul, and is consciously master of his own life.

We freely admit that each of us must eat for himself; we would not dream of trying to take exercise by deputy; each of us, without reasoning about it, learns to keep his center of gravity directly over the center of support, in such a manner that the line joining the two, if produced, would pass through the center of the earth; or, to speak plain prose, each one of the thousand five hundred millions of people on the globe has to learn to stand upright, by his own exertions, and to breathe on his own account from the boundless ocean of the air. And we all admit this necessary independence in each person's relation with the natural world, and we should esteem any man to be of unsound intellect, who maintained the contrary.

Yet how many people will as easily admit that we must learn to stand on our own feet, in the spiritual world? The reason is, because they have no such faith in the spiritual world, as they have in the natural world, and no such belief in our real and intimate relation with spiritual powers. Yet that relation is as intimate, as constant, as uninterrupted, as our relation with gravity, or with the air we breathe, not as a metaphor at all, but as a simple, unadorned fact. We are in spiritual life all the time, whether we know it or not; whether we want it or not; whether we have ever dreamed of it or not. And our evident duty is, to find our own footing, and to keep it as sturdily and as naturally, as we keep our footing in the natural world.

If we get this clearly into our minds, we shall see how misleading is much that is said and written about Meditation. It is suggested that we should "meditate" in order to "come into contact with adepts." I imagine that the contact, if established, would in most cases be very embarrassing to both parties. But that is not the point. What business has anyone to "come into contact with

adepts," or to want to do so? What a man should really aspire to, is to master his own life, and use his own powers; to become a stable and reliable member of the cosmic family, and to be of such force that he may perform such duties as fall in his way, towards his neighbors and himself.

It may seem that this is a small thing to aspire to. It is anything but a small thing. I never knew anyone yet that had mastered a tithe of his powers, or was in any immediate danger of so doing. For there are unsounded infinities in every man, deep well-springs of immortality, of joy, of power, which only the ages will fully reveal to him, and he has only to begin to take an inventory of his treasures, to learn that they are really boundless. But what chance has anyone to gain this mastery or his own life, if he is all the time running after other peoples' opinions? And what worse form can this pursuit take, than the adept-hunting which we have all seen so much of?

I am perfectly certain that no adept, master, magician, sage, or whatever you may call him, can do anything at all for anyone who does not stand on his own feet in the spiritual world, and see with his own eyes. Then there is no longer a question of the big brother doing something for the little brother, in the spoon-feeding sense. The matter is rather that two people, of the respectable brotherhood of man, have come naturally together, each following his own path, and that they will journey a while in common, each meanwhile doing his own walking, his own breathing, his own seeing.

And what is generally thought of, as meditation, is simply a psychological trick to defeat this natural order of things, and to gain some imagined advantage, beginning with occult powers, and ending with the attainment of Nirvana.

We have been told, by the various adherents of Meditation, that one should set apart an hour, or half an hour, every day, and fix the mind on something, variously suggested, from the dial of a watch, to the mind of Parabrahm, and that by repeating this process, one will finally find himself in the company of the sages. I have known a great many people who advocated these practises, through a good many years, but I cannot say that the result is, on the whole, cheering. Many of them are greatly satisfied with what they say they have attained, and will tell you the number of mansions in the Father's house, or almost anything else, except what is of value for real life; but the truth seems to be that, by following any of these psychic panaceas, they ultimately lose all sane

touch with real life, and drift off into some imaginary paradise, which their imaginations have, unknown to themselves, been building up, and in which they pass useless days, until the end comes, and they are set adrift again.

I do not think the great secret is so readily won ; and I feel inclined to suspect the wisdom of anyone who professes to have a certain bundle of recipes for spiritual wisdom, whether he be called an adept, or an archangel. Life is not so simple as that. There is a private revelation, to each of us, of the meaning of our own lives, and until we have listened very attentively to that, we shall be ill employed listening to anyone else's wisdom.

It seems to me that this idea of master and pupil is simply an outcome of the instinct of cowardice on the one hand, and domination on the other, of which I have already spoken. This exalting of a human being for worship always fills me with misgiving. The worshipped cannot be more than a human being ; the worshipper cannot be less. One may admire and rejoice in the wisdom of another, but that is no reason for disloyalty towards one's own soul. We may admire a sprint runner, but we do not therefore give up walking, on our own accounts.

These are but a few of the directions in which I think we are in great danger of being misled, or of misleading ourselves. They all arise from looking for light in wrong directions. We must look to our own souls for light, and nowhere else. And we must remember that the finding of the light, the awakening of an intuition, is not the end of the matter, but the beginning. An intutition is a perception of something to do. Then comes the question: have we the courage to do it? Till we settle that, we shall have no second intuition, no further light. And I do not think that one's courage is reinforced by meditation. On the contrary, the more you meditate on a thing to be done, the less likely are you to do it. The real thing is, not meditation, but action. Meditation is the sketch. Action is the picture. Meditation is the plan. Action is the building. A wise rule is : when you have perceived even a little light, meditate no more until you have accomplished what you saw was to be done.

And I question the wisdom of set periods for meditation. The Spirit has its own wild way of speaking to man, and makes little account of his often pious invitations. The great thing is, when that Spirit speaks, be it but once in a life-time, that we shall be ready to obey ; and not "through vileness make the great betrayal." When we have carried out one command of the Spirit, it

will be time enough to invite the next. I think each of us could shrewdly guess at some one thing to be done, without any prolonged meditation. It is not the insight we lack, so much as the nerve to try if it will work; to make experiments, even at the risk of upsetting our comfortable lives. Our blood runs chill and thin, and no amount of Meditation will warm it. A little action will clear things up, more than a great deal of meditation. The real matter is the question of our wills. The later Indian schools exalted the intellect and its perceptions, and almost forgot the will. And from these schools come the maxims of meditation which are retailed to us.

Nothing, whether in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, can save us at all, except the valor of our own souls.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION.

FOR THE USE OF BRANCHES.

The following subjects are supplied as being suitable for discussion at branch meetings. They are by various students who have had experience in conducting such meetings. It should be clearly understood that statements made herein are *suggestions for discussion*, are not official, nor in any way authoritative. Similar outlines will be gladly received by the editor, who reserves the right to make such alterations in their construction as may seem advisable.—EDITOR.

ZOROASTRIANISM.

Frequently called Fire Worship, Sun Worship, Parseeism, etc. Founded by Zarathustra or Zoroaster. Date unknown. Sacred book. the Zend-Avesta. The duality of manifestation proceeding from the unmanifested unity. The great duad of Ormuzd and Ahriman symbolizing good and evil, true and false, etc. The forces and qualities assisting Ormuzd in his battle with Ahriman. The field of battle the present earth life, the object of the war the future of man. Both forces endowed with creative or reproductive faculty. Firm belief in Karma and the impossibility of escaping it. The doctrines of Reincarnation and the Septenary constitution of man as found in Zoroastrianism.

REFERENCES:

Five Years of Theosophy, "*Zoroastrianism on the Septenary Constitution of Man;*" *Lucifer*, *Vol. viii*, *p. 1*; *Glossary arts.* "*Zarathustra*" *and* "*Zend-Avesta*"; *Encyclopaedia Britannica.*

ASTRAL BODY.

The seat of the senses and emotions. Its functions and powers. The nerve fluid, astral and akin, to the ether of Science. The propagation of the nerve sensations akin to the propagation of light electricity or other astral vibrations.

The astral as the mold and matrix of the physical. The effect upon it of thought; of the various emotions of fear, anger, jealousy, etc.; of elementals and the forces of the astral plane. Conditions determining the relative permanency of the astral. The various meanings that have been given in Theosophical literature to the term Astral Body. The danger of mediumship. The necessity of a powerful and trained will before the astral forces can be safely faced. Effect of concentration in obtaining this and in purifying the astral.

REFERENCES:

Isis Unveiled, vol. i, chap. 7 and 9. Ocean of Theosophy, chap. 16. Astral Intoxication.

CASTE.

Its origin—true or false? The existence of caste in the Spiritual World? Does Occultism uphold it? Caste as quality. Difference between true and apparent caste. The four principal castes of India. Fundamental unity behind all differentiation and so behind all caste. The attitude of the Theosophical Society toward it.

REFERENCES:

Bhagavad Gita.
Theosophical Glossary.
Constitution of the T. S. in A.

NATURE'S FINER FORCES.

The importance of their investigation and the proofs they furnish of latent occult powers in man. The seven-fold division of force on each of the seven planes. The positive and negative, or kinetic and potential aspect of each force.

The astral forces—Nerve action, gravitation, electricity, magnetism, etc., recognized by Science as etheric or lower astral forces. The finer forces of the mind and heart. The unconscious exercise of these in each act of life. The training of the occultist leading to their conscious use. The effect of concentration in attaining this.

REFERENCES:

Nature's Finer Forces; Occult World; The Astral Light.

THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND WORK.

PROCLAMATION.

Adopted at the Convention held at Boston, April, 1895.

The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling towards all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race or religious belief, whose intentions aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness and unselfish regard

one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely profers its services.

It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and it will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm *a scientific basis for ethics.*

And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* they tread in this.

THEOSOPHICAL ACTIVITIES.

It is vacation time with most of the Branches of the T. S. A. A few Branches like that at Dayton, O., hold meetings right through the hot weather, but few possess such tireless workers as Mr. Harter, and are able to pack their meeting rooms in spite of the heat. The interest everywhere is genuine. Theosophy is not only unabated, but really augmented since sensationalism has been eliminated and fanaticism placed at a discount. A large number of diplomas have been issued to new members in June and July. From hundreds of letters received from old members the expression of security and confidence in the work, and in the future of the old T. S. A. is unanimous. The old society was never stronger than it is to-day. What is has lost in members it has gained in strength, repose, intelligence and earnestness. The ordeals passed have become stepping-stones to higher things. We miss old associates it is true, sincere and earnest souls who found needs and affiliations elsewhere, and these too will serve their time and eventually stand alone and co-operate, rather than feel the need of command. In the coming season, those "who can best work and best agree," will prove to be the real Theosophists. The work begun by heroic souls will not lag, for there will always be found those to carry it on and into the next century. There is no dispute or disagreement over the sublime philosophy. Personalities are transient, while principles are eternal, and all in time will learn to discriminate.

Since it is being stated in certain quarters and made the basis of many commentaries that at the Chicago convention I voted in committee *for* the resolutions, constitution, etc., and in convention voted *against* them. I desire to say, that neither in committee nor in conventioa did I vote at all. either for or against the matters proposed. I did vote for the *reading* of the matters proposed. This is a plain question of *fact* concerning which no one knows so well as myself. It is true that I might have changed my mind, but I did not, and did not vote at all.

J. D. Buck, *President T. S. A.*

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA.

(New South Wales Division.

We had a divisional meeting on June 7th, to elect officers to fill the vacancies, with result as follows:

President, - -	T. Soederberg.	Vice-President, -	C. B. Hilliard.
Secretary, - -	C. A. Marshall.	Treasurer, - -	E. T. Redman.

June 13th was the annual meeting of the Central Lodge, to elect officers for the ensuing year, with result as follows:

President, - -	C. A. Marshall.	Vice-President, -	Capt. Ritchie.
Secretary, - -	C. B. Hilliard.	Treasurer. - -	Irwin Wilson.
Librarian, - -	Mrs. M. J. Hutchison.	Councillors, -	G. I. Redman and A. Ringdahl.

I am glad to tell you that everything is going along swimmingly,—better than we could *have expected*. All members are doing their utmost. The Central Lodge gave a free "Social" last Tuesday, and we had seventy-four present. Our Sunday evening public lectures are well attended, averaging about forty present, and we get good press notices of all meetings in the daily papers.

I am delighted to hear that there is a prospect of Dr. Buck being President, and I am sure all here will be pleased.

The heartiest fraternal greetings to all our American Brethren.

(*Signed*) CLEMENT B. HILLIARD.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN ENGLAND.

The adjourned fourth annual general meeting of the T. S. in Europe (Eng.) was held on the 7th July, 1898, at 78 Wigmore street, London, W.

Dr. Archibald Keightley, President of the T. S. in E. (E.), took the chair at 8 p. m.

The following branches were represented:—Bow, H. P. B., West Middlesex, Colchester, Durham County, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Scarborough, Southport, and South Shields.

The proposed amendments of the Constitution and By-Laws of the T. S. in E. (E.) were, with a slight alteration, unanimously carried, the alteration being that the words "a local society may decline to entertain any application for membership therein at the pleasure of its members, but" should be deleted from the section relating to membership. It was, after full discussion, considered that local societies should exercise their own discretion on this without having their powers defined by the constitution.

The North Shield and Middlesbrough Centres also signified their approval of the amendments, and the Cleveland T. S. applied for a certificate of federation.

Mr. Green was elected Secretary and Mr. Bruce remains Treasurer. Under the amended constitution the Society has no officials except the Presidents of local societies, who form the Council.

The fourth annual general meeting was adjourned *sine die*.

HARMONY AND DISCORD.

I am still as busy as ever, writing "Lotusbluethen," etc., and the spirit is spreading, but I have nothing to do with any organization or "sides." I have wasted too much time and energy with such tomfooleries and quarrels, and while I am wishing God speed to all such societies I am not inclined to attach myself again to any particular one.

My view is, that they are all right, each from their own point of view, and I feel no more called upon to interfere in their business. They are all preparatory schools; they are "*theosophical*" societies, but not *Societies of Theosophists*, as otherwise they would act in harmony. Those who have not yet become ripe to be inspired by the spirit of truth, need an authority, and they are at liberty to follow whomsoever they choose; but when it comes to regard others, who do

not follow the same flag, as heretics, then they act according to the spirit of intolerance; they act against the spirit of their own constitution, and cease to be theosophical.

There might be a thousand theosophical societies, each following a different leader, and nevertheless all working together in harmony; but this is prevented by the self-interest and self-love of each branch, because each one wants to rule all and to dictate to everybody. The view of the T. S. has been the establishment of that so-called *E. S.*, and the admittance to it of people who were not ripe for it. Each of these E. S. schools fancies itself to be not only spiritually, but exoterically the "soul" of the T. S. entitled to monkey the whole T. S. Thus the whole thing becomes a tomfoolery.

The *real* T. S. will always consist of those, who, whether they belong to any external organization or not, are following the principle of theosophy, and those who do not wish to follow that principle are only counterfeit theosophists. There is as much partisanship in the T. S. as among any of the Christian sects. I can do no better than let each party have their own way. I am ready to co-operate with every person who strives for the light, and if any "side" does not wish my co-operation, they are welcome to let it alone.

Joining a new society does not change human nature, and whenever there is a crowd, human weakness will step in. Outward organization is a means for accomplishing outward work; but every such organization is a "self" with its self-interest to defend and its growing greed for possession and rule. Thus I think it matters not how many so-called T. S. exist, and what they are believing, as long as each one does something useful in its own way.

FRANZ HARTMANN.

Hallein, July 19th, 1898.

REVIEW.

The Editor of *The English Theosophist*, wisely writes, in the July number:

"The small soul longs for chelaship; that under that paternal guidance of some beneficent guru it may attain to heights of knowledge and power for which this very aspiration proves it utterly unfitted. The natural process of evolution is too slow for its impatience, the natural methods of spiritual growth too humble for its self-conceit. Its greed for occult knowledge is cunningly veiled, even to itself, by a specious pretence that it longs to be great that it may help humanity. But it dreams of extending that help from a lofty pedestal of superiority! That is what condemns it and brings about its appropriate punishment; for, puffed up with the sacred importance of its own little self, it falls an easy victim to any superstition which shall seem to grant its impossible requests."

Dr. F. Hartmann sounds the same note:

"In a letter which I received from a *Master* while at Adyar in 1884 occurs the following sentence:—"*We are leaders, not nurses. It is those who are weakest, not the stronger ones, who are ever expecting 'orders, orders,' and are occasionally humoured by us through chelas. This is willing vassalage and not healthy growth.*" Thus it appears that the suppression of one's own reason and judgment cannot be the foundation-stone of a society calling itself theosophical, however well suited and comfortable such a supervision may be for those who have not yet attained the power to rise to the region of wisdom—*i. e.*, to those heights from which shines the true light of the higher mind, and in which alone *theosophy* can be found."

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

A blank affirmation of membership in the T. S. A. was inserted in each number of the June FORUM, and members were requested to fill it out and send it to Dr. J. D. Buck. Several hundred did so, but as a large number have not yet sent in their names we reprint the form here. Those who have not already complied are requested to write out the affirmation and send it in promptly to Dr. Buck.

DR. J. D. BUCK, President,

116 W. 7th St.,

Cincinnati, Ohio.

Dear Sir and Brother:

I desire hereby to affirm my membership in the Theosophical Society in America, as organized and constituted by the Convention at Cincinnati, May 29th, 1898.

Name (Mr., Mrs. or Miss).....

Street.....

Town or City.....

State.....

This number of the FORUM is sent only to such members as have already notified the office of their desire to receive the magazine or who have subscribed for it in the regular way. Hereafter it will be sent only to such members as have sent in their names to Dr. Buck, and to outside subscribers. Members who have not sent in the blank as set forth above will therefore not receive the FORUM after this number. It is understood, of course, that the annual dues to the Society cover the subscription of $1.00, which is required of all not members of the T. S. in A.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

FOUNDED BY H. P. BLAVATSKY AT NEW YORK IN 1875.

Its objects are:

1st. The formation of a nucleus of universal brotherhood of humanity without distinctions of race, creed, sex, caste or color.

2d. The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences.

3d. The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

The Society does not pretend to be able to establish at once an universal brotherhood among men, but only strives to create a nucleus of such a body; and many of its members believe that an acquaintance with religions and philosophies will reveal as their common and fundamental principle that "spiritual identity of all Souls with the Oversoul" which is the underlying genius of true brotherhood; and also that an intelligent comprehension of the finer forces of nature and man still further tends to the same conclusion.

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The Society is not responsible for any statements therein unless contained in an official document. Questions, answers to questions, opinions and notes on Theosophical subjects are invited.

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